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CANADIAN NATIONALITY : ITS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

BY

WILLIAM CANNIFF, M.D., M.R.C.S., ENG.

AUTHOR OF

"PRINCIPLES OF SURGERY," AND "SETTLEMENT OF UPPER CANADA."

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HART & RAWLINSON, PUBLISHERS AND BOOKSELLERS,

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CANADA TO ENGLAND.

- “Mother of many prosperous lands !
Thy children in this far-off west,—
Seeing that, vague and undefined,
A cloud comes up to mar our rest ;
Fearing that busy tongues, whose speech
Is mischief, may have caused a breach,
And frayed the delicate links which bind
Our people each to each,—
With loving hearts and outstretched hands,
Send greeting leal and kind.
- “Heed not the teachings of a school
Of shallow sophists, who would part
The outlying members of thy rule ;
Who fain would lop, with felon stroke,
The branches of our English oak.
And, wronging the great English heart,
Would deem her honour cheaply sold
For higher prices on the mart,
And increased hoard of gold.
- “That though many a thousand miles
Of boisterous waters ebb and flow
Between us and the favoured Isles—
The “Inviolable Isles” which boast thy sway—
No time nor distance can divide
What gentlest bonds have firmest tied ;
And this we fain would have you know,
The which let none gainsay !

“Nay, rather let the wide world hear,
That we, so far, are yet so near—
That come what may, in weal or woe,
Our hearts are one this day !

“This is *our* hope ! and as for *you*,
Be just as you are generous, mother !
And let not those who rashly speak
Things which they know not, render weak
The ties that bind us to each other.”

—NEW DOMINION MONTHLY.

It would prove an interesting subject for the student of history to consider the circumstances which led to the creation of the Dominion of Canada, the youngest born of the nations of the earth—to consider who were the sturdy and intrepid pioneers that invaded the primæval forest and planted the several colonies which now form the provinces of the Dominion, and who they were that sowed the seed, the fruit of which is the present Dominion ; also what was the nature of the soil, what were the prospects of success during the early years of settlement, and were the circumstances favourable, or otherwise, which attended the process of germination. To duly consider these questions would involve something more than a glance at the history of the colonial life of the several provinces planted by European nations upon the American Continent, especially by England and France ; at the struggles between these two powers in America for supremacy, and at the great rebellion of the thirteen British colonies, which resulted in the independence of the United States. But we intend to pass by the events connected with the history of the individual provinces which have united together to form the Canadian Confederation.

We take the day of Confederation as the period when there appeared as a living power in America, a Canadian National sentiment. Prior to that event, the feeling of attachment to the individual provinces had been of the most feeble nature, excepting among the French and the United Empire Loyalists. It was not choice that brought most of the old countrymen to British America. Going to a colony was regarded as going into exile, and, mainly, they remained in the colonies because they could not help themselves, or with the view of acquiring means whereby to live in comfort at *home*, in civilized Europe!

The life, then, of the individual British American Colonies may be regarded as a period of incubation, which resulted in the production of the Dominion of Canada.

The day of birth is usually one of joy among the members of the household in domestic life; and should not joy have sprung into the hearts of all the inhabitants of the confederated provinces when the union was consummated? Was not the occasion sufficiently important to create a new feeling unlike any previously existing sentiment? They were no longer to be mere colonists, but to form a "new nationality." Not that the Nova Scotian, or the New Brunswickian, or the Lower Canadian, or the Upper Canadian, or the inhabitant of any other part of British America should cease to love his own province; but like a brother, still entertaining all the natural affection for his sister, finds his whole being permeated by a new, strong, irresistible devotion to his bride.

The consolidation of British North America secured to the sons of the soil for settlement a vast extent of territory, and a mine of wealth quite sufficient to evoke the highest aspirations, which never could have existed,

or been satisfied, while the provinces remained in an isolated state. Each one was a pent-up Utica. At the same time, the immigrant, no matter where from, had offered to him, beneath the bright sky of Canada, in her bracing atmosphere, in the treasures contained in her woods and land and waters, more than a recompence for all he had left behind in the old world ; so that, although fond memory would not allow him to forget the land of his fathers, yet for the new land he could feel a new-born and even a stronger love.

The event was of a character so grand, and the requirements of the time, of such an earnest nature, to nourish and protect the new-born nation, that all party feeling connected with the individual provinces should have been completely and forever overwhelmed in the great, deep feeling of joy at the appearance of the "new nationality." It was no time for individual dislikes and personal jealousies to disturb where repose was required, and unanimity should prevail. But, looking back upon the infant days of the Dominion, we fail to see all of the conditions and circumstances so necessary to secure and promote the welfare of the tender child. For a few brief days, harmonious action prevailed among the foster parents and nurses, and there was unusual joy over the new nationality, but subsequently there has been rather a hard time for the young nation, and the growth and development have not been what was anticipated immediately after Confederation. The fact is, the attendants could not agree among themselves. Each one wanted to be head nurse. The result has been unfortunate for the child.

But notwithstanding certain hindrances to the growth and development of the new nation, and a Canadian na-

tional sentiment, they have continued to live, and even to advance. There have been found those whose patriotism enable them to rise above the murky, often polluted atmosphere of partyism, and look only at the welfare of the Dominion. Indeed, there were many who continued to feel the deepest solicitude for the welfare of the new nation, and who endeavoured to arouse and cultivate a spirit of love for, and a belief in, its future success. There were not a few silent workers who gave their aid to the patriotic cause. A few, with eloquent tones and trumpet voice, assisted materially in promoting the work. Of these, we may mention the deeply lamented Thomas D'Arcy McGee, who did perhaps in his day more than any other single person to establish faith in the possibility of a "great northern nation" in America, and to warm into active life a patriotic love for the new nationality. His mantle unfortunately fell on no form endowed with such splendid energies and noble gifts. Without undertaking to mention all the adverse circumstances, it may be stated that it was not long before the new-born patriotism began to languish in the impure air of extreme partyism. The conflict between those in power and those out of power became so fierce and so general that the interests of the Dominion were neglected, or became secondary in the consideration of the combatants.

Growth and development has been in a measure manifested of late by the organization of a National Association. Many of the originators and promoters of this movement were deeply imbued with a desire to escape from the thralldom of partyism, which had become intolerable, and it is doubtless a cause of regret with these that they have been unable to prevent rash efforts to chain the Canadian Association to the leadership of a bitter and

extreme partizan. But while the personal ambition of a few may have rendered abortive the movement of the Canadian Society as a body, the principles advocated by the Association originally, have not ceased to grow. While the Association can hardly merge into a distinct political party, Canadianism has made an indelible impression upon both political parties. Public speakers, of every political complexion, now-a-days never open their mouths to speak without declaring their adhesion to the doctrine first promulgated by the Canadian Association. So the growth and development of Canadian feeling has been greatly advanced. The two political parties of the Dominion, although often more concerned about the success of party than the interests of the country, have learned that it will best serve party purposes by giving utterance to Canadian sentiment. Thus the Canadian Association has been the means of arousing throughout the Dominion a dormant feeling of Canadian nationality; and, notwithstanding the efforts put forth in Ontario to erect Dominion parties upon the narrow basis of Ontario politics, and to galvanize into life the dead issues of anti-confederation times, a more general and healthy political feeling has been established. In fact, the growth and development of Canadian nationality have steadily proceeded; and if the Canadian Association does nothing more, and ceases now to exist, it—instead of having lived in vain—will have served a most important purpose at a most critical hour in the life of Confederated Canada. The organization of the Canadian Society did not take place without opposition. Its right to exist was challenged with no weak voice, and its objects and motives were criticised with an unsparing hand. By some it was by turns ridiculed and misrepresented. Not only politicians, but others, at first scouted

the idea of a Canadian Society in Canada, declaring that as well might a society of Englishmen be formed in England. But nevertheless, the reasons for such an Association have been fully recognized, although a political Canadian party may be an impossibility. Indeed, it would be a strange doctrine to advance—that the natural affection an Englishman, or Irishman, or Scotchman possesses for his native country, is incompatible with a patriotic devotion to the whole empire; and on what solid ground can rest the accusation that Canadians, in fostering a similar love of country, are compromising their patriotism as Britons. On the contrary, is it not true that the greater the attachment one has for his native land, the greater will usually be his devotion to the whole, of which his province forms a part. The man who loves and labours for his family is not thereby straitened as a citizen.

An article, penned by the writer, appeared about a year and a half ago in the public prints. As appropriate to this part of our subject, a selection from that article is here introduced :

“A society of Englishmen in England, or of Scotchmen in Scotland, would be ridiculous; while a society of Irishmen in Ireland generally means treason and disloyalty; and a society of Canadians in Canada must also be one or the other. It is submitted that this view is a mistaken one. The position of Canada in her relation to the Empire is very different from either of the three United Kingdoms of Great Britain. Canada is a colony. Now, a colony is settled, and, for a time at least, peopled altogether by individuals who, from various causes, have left *home* to live abroad—away from all the attractions of home. Rarely do they come to feel perfectly at home

in the colony. At least, there remains a longing for the scenes of childhood. This feeling naturally obtains, and retains tenaciously, the first and the strongest place in the immigrant's affections. No one can find fault with this love of country. It is, in fact, one of the noblest traits of the human mind. As a result of this, we have in Canada the different national societies—the St. George's, the St. Patrick's, and St. Andrew's. By means of these societies, old associations are revived in the mind, and from time to time the glories and memories of Fatherland are celebrated. Not only have these societies afforded pleasure to their members in this way, but oftentimes benevolence has characterized their behaviour. A fellow-countryman in distress has been relieved, and in various ways aided in obtaining a livelihood. This is all praiseworthy and beneficial to the public. Moreover, frequently these national societies have been the means of inducing—perhaps assisting—fellow-countrymen at home to emigrate to the colony. But, unfortunately, the operations of these societies have not been limited to the field indicated. In the first place, to become a member of these societies it is not necessary to be a native of the country to which the respective society owes its name. Not only the children, but the descendants of the immigrants are eligible for membership. The result of this is that, in a great measure, the population of Canada is composed of foreign nationalities, and any one not connected with either has been almost an outcast—at least deprived of certain advantages—and natives of the soil are often more anxious to be considered English, Irish, or Scotch than Canadians. But more: too often these societies are used for political purposes, nationality being appealed to, to persuade the elector to vote for a certain candidate.

“ If this can be said of these societies—in so many respects meritorious and fruitful of good—what shall be said of those of foreign birth, many of them secret organizations, which are entirely political, or sectarian, or hostile to certain portions of the inhabitants, often some other society? An immigrant has a right to maintain the characteristics of his native country, and to cherish her memory—to think even more of his native land than the land of his adoption. But has he a right to bring to the new country the prejudices and the dislikes—the clannishness and the feuds which exist in the old country? Should the family quarrels and the sectarian animosities, not merely of another country but of another age, be carried across the Atlantic and planted in new soil, or engrafted in new institutions, to be nourished and perpetuated by the young of Canada? Is it not a curse to any country to have its people split into factions—divided into numerous *isms*?

“ How great would be the benefit if the barriers erected by sectionalism, prejudice, and bigotry not native to Canadian soil, but having their birth-place in another part of the world, were dissolved by a noble patriotism, so as to create a homogenous whole!

“ Of course all societies such as referred to, have a legal right to exist, and no doubt the Orangeman sincerely believes that his own safety and that of the country, and the safety of the Protestant religion depends upon the Orange organization. At the same time the Irish Roman Catholics band together to protect themselves, and maintain their welfare—to prevent any tendency to extinction. The existence of one is the reason or excuse for the continuation of the other.

"I dare say, from what I have already written, it will be apparent to most what are, at least, some of the grounds upon which Canadianism has been or is being erected. The evils referred to have been increasing. For the last few years, a number of thoughtful Canadians—Canadians by birth and adoption—have been considering the matter, and now and then talking among themselves, with the view of seeing if something could not be done to remedy, if not entirely remove them. When, by a union of previously contending parties, Confederation was accomplished, and the Dominion of Canada was presented to the nations of the world, there was a hope that in a grand universal desire to build up the Dominion, the petty warfare of faction would be entirely submerged in a common Canadian sentiment. But this hope was short-lived; the ambition of demagogues, and the hate of partizans aimed a serious blow at the "New Nationality." The question presented itself: can nothing be done to change the political character of the Dominion—to silence sectional cries, and to elevate political life to a position in keeping with the extent of our country—to have the provincial political parties superseded by a national feeling co-equal with the wide domain confederated together? It has been impossible for the distinguished statesman who has been so long at the head of the Government, and who has done so much, notwithstanding ungenerous opposition, to advance the interests of the country, to consider and mature the best measures for the welfare of the Dominion. A man who has constantly to defend his life can hardly engage in any avocation. A statesman who is daily assailed, constantly misrepresented, whose motives are impugned, and character incessantly vilified, must be indeed a great man to successfully lead a Government and build up a nation. The difficulties that beset the

late government and diverted their energies will, it is to be feared, so embarrass the present government, that to maintain a majority in parliament will exhaust all their powers, while the ship of state will drift, or float down the stream at hap-hazard. Fighting to hold the seals of office, the present government may, ere long, be forced into a position quite as untenable as that lately evacuated by the former government. (The reader may judge to what extent the prophecy has already been fulfilled.)

“ In view of all these facts, it can be no cause of wonder that a new—a Canadian party, should arise distinct from any now in existence. Canadian associations have for some years existed in different parts of the country; but their object has been historical, literary, or perhaps, to counteract the untoward influences of other national societies upon the young men. At all events, they have not been political. The exigencies of the present hour seem to warrant the creation of a Canadian political party.* It is believed that the principles of this party will meet with a response, when fairly enunciated and understood, throughout the Dominion. What do the people of British Columbia, on the one hand, and those of Prince Edward Island, on the other, care about Gritism or the old Tory party of Ontario? Why should Dominion politics be built up on the narrow basis of Ontario partyism? The Canadian party appeal to all, irrespective of province, of creed, of nationality. The utterance of the party is, ‘Sink personal animosities; bury past differences of merely provincial interest; forget nationality, if from abroad; listen not to

* The writer is now convinced that a Canadian political party is an impossibility. No doubt, however, whichever party be in power will hereafter give more prominence to the views originated and urged by the Canadian Association during its brief existence.

sectional cries; and become Canadians.' If these sentiments prevail in the Dominion, very shortly will a more healthy tone characterize political life. Not only may we hope to have buried the thoughts of old political issues, but sectarian bigotry overcome. The shameful scenes we have witnessed on St. Patrick's day and the 12th of July, will belong to the past. The sad spectacle of contention between Canadian Young Britons and Irish Canadians, will no longer be witnessed. And every young man of Canada will reply, if asked, Do you belong to this or that association? 'No, I am a Canadian.'

"Before closing, I wish to refer to another important result that might be anticipated if old party lines of Old Canada were obliterated. It would tend to blend the French element with the Anglo-Saxon. They are French so long as we have English, Irish and Scotch in our country; but if the English, Irish and Scotch would become Canadians, so would the French."

We have spoken not merely of the growth of the Dominion, but of a Canadian national feeling. These together may be designated the body and soul of national life. They grow together; one is dependent on the other. But with healthy growth there is usually a corresponding development. The Dominion has not only grown materially, but a wonderful degree of development has taken place; in fact, development has at times been greater, more rapid than the growth, an event to be deprecated as much as precocity in the child. In the life of a nation, as in the life of man, there is no standing still—growth and development continue until maturity is reached, and then degeneration and decline ensue; there is constant advancement; it may be (in a young nation it ought to be) upward, it may be downward. We may not fix the life

of a nation, but we can determine the point when maturity has passed ; if a nation ceases to advance upward, she will begin to decline. The policy adopted by the Gladstone government, the utterances heard from the English press and many British statesmen a few years ago, with respect to the Colonies of the Empire, supplied ample reason for the belief that the British nation had arrived at that important era in its existence ; but recent manifestations show that the sap in the tree is yet full of vitality and vigour, and they give promise of a far greater Britain in the future than we have in this nineteenth century. Is it too visionary to say that the twentieth century may witness a British Empire that will embrace every foot of land occupied by the Anglo-Saxon, including every one who speaks the English language.

Returning to our subject : we look for growth and development in the Dominion ; we expect to see its vast resources within a few decades made available for the interests of the country, and we may at the same time anticipate further growth and development of the Canadian national feeling which is the soul of the Dominion. Now it must be confessed that the direction this development shall take is a matter of uncommon interest, of the most vital importance, and calculated to arouse feelings of considerable anxiety with the patriotic Canadian. Canadianism, or the newly created national sentiment, is endowed with vital powers of a nature so sturdy, that its continued existence cannot be questioned : Canadians will no longer allow themselves to be regarded as mere colonists, they will no longer tolerate imported supercilious mediocrity—they will be satisfied with nothing less than equality with the people of the United Kingdom. As Canadian British subjects they will suffer no obstacles to

bar their entrance to all the privileges and honours open to their fellow subjects in England. Such then being the fact, what direction will the development of Canadian national feeling take in its onward course, for onward it must move !

Certain parties were, or pretended to be, seized with the belief that Canadianism would necessarily and inevitably lead to Independence, and that this would be only a stepping-stone to Annexation to the United States. Others hold that independence, instead of leading to annexation, will be the most certain means of once and forever settling the question against the possibility of annexation. But a large number, which is constantly increasing, entertain the strongest conviction that the development will be toward an Imperial Confederation. It is right, however, here to state that it formed no part in the considerations of the originators of the Canadian Association to mark out the line in which Canadian feeling should march. On their part there was simply a declaration of individual existence as a nation—a throwing off of the swaddling clothes as a colony. The destiny of the Dominion was considered in one respect only, namely, that it should never become annexed to the United States. At least, this was the aim of the great majority of the promoters of Canadianism. It cannot be denied that certain circumstances gave reason for a public belief that independence was to be the aim of the movement, with a view to ultimate annexation. The unfortunate use of the motto *Canada First*, and the more unfortunate declamation against British institutions and honours, at a public meeting, had a disastrous effect upon the movement while it was in an incipient stage. But nevertheless, the principles aroused by the Association as

a body, have, as we have seen, quickly spread and permeated both political parties. With regard to the future, we may safely leave the work of development to proceed in accordance with natural laws. If the growth of the Dominion be healthy and steady, the development will likewise be normal and lasting. It is neither desirable nor healthy to force either growth or development. It may confidently be affirmed that the development of Canadianism will not be toward independence, much less annexation, unless violently turned by the conduct of England through her press or public men.

From the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the extended border line to the most remote settlement, among all classes, all nationalities, from the most cultivated to the most barbarous savage that roams in the north-west, the feeling is, not simply a desire for continued British connection, but almost a total disbelief in any other possible state of political existence. Any statement made by the press, or in any other way, which would lead Great Britain to believe that even a small minority of Canadians desired political independence, is not only untrue, but a shameful fraud. [The organization of a club in Toronto, with the cognomen, *U. E. Club*, has a deeper signification than might at first seem to attach to it.] If a desire for Independence may be found existing in any part of Canada—perhaps growing in some secluded spot—the seed was sown by persons in England: it was scattered by the adherents of the Manchester school, who have sought to dismember the empire. Should these views again be expressed by responsible persons in England, it is by no means unlikely that the nascent Canadian sentiment will find its field of growth and development in the way of political independence. What per-

secution, poverty, and distress of every kind could not accomplish among the United Empire Loyalists, may be effected by taunts and sneers, such as have emanated from the London *Times*. But in the event of such a suicidal policy, so far as Great Britain is concerned, prevailing, and Canadian independence resulting, the autonomy of Canada will not be effected except to increase its strength. The growth and development of Canadianism has attained to a sufficient magnitude to make its permanent existence a matter of absolute certainty.

If a small tree should be planted beside a large one, where the soil was only sufficient to sustain *one*, the larger would sooner or later destroy the smaller. But no such condition exists on this continent with regard to the United States and Canada. There is ample room for both ; and the United States would not attempt to force Canada into the union. It is true the attitude that nation has always maintained towards Canada has been uniformly unfriendly, often actually hostile. Indeed, the history of the United States is prominently characterized by unswerving efforts to obtain possession of British America. Every inch of land along the boundary which could possibly be claimed has become from time to time a question of international dispute. And in consequence of the ignorance or indifference of British negotiators on the one hand, and American craftiness on the other, valuable and important portions of Canadian territory have been severed from their legitimate connection, to enlarge the domain of the United States. It is true that shortly after the Revolutionary War, when numbers of American Loyalists had sought new homes in the wilderness of Upper Canada, the United States endeavoured to starve them out by insisting upon an early evacuation by

the British of the various military posts along the frontier, which were a channel through which came the necessities of life to the refugee settler. It is true that at the close of last century the United States sought a reason to declare war against England in order to seize Canada, and that in 1812, war was actually made—whatever reason may have been given—that British America might be conquered. Again, it is true that the Canadian rebellion in 1837-8 was encouraged, with the expectation of acquiring the country; and again it is true that the United States acted a disgraceful part in publicly and privately encouraging Fenians to invade Canada for the same object: and it is true that, in a multitude of ways, efforts have been put forth to control the destiny of the country by indoctrinating Canadians with the theory of Manifest Destiny. So constant has been the effort, and so unscrupulous the means to secure the desired end, that it is no cause of surprise that fears should be felt that, when Canada ceased to be under the protection of Great Britain, the United States would, without delay, find a reason or excuse for carrying out an intention cherished throughout her whole national life. But if we examine the matter, it will be found that such a conclusion is unwarranted. The fact is, the people of the United States have held, and continue to hold, although perhaps in a less degree, a bitter hatred to England. While the native Americans have been educated from childhood to regard England as a foe, many of the immigrants to the States have brought with them an undying enmity to Great Britain. With such feelings prevailing, it was natural for the nation to seek every opportunity to wound the object of their dislike, if not at the heart, at least in an extremity. Although a lust of territory was felt by the United States, the chief motive

was to cripple England in America, and, if possible, remove her flag from the continent. If Canada were independent, the probability is the United States would leave her alone. The Americans have enough on their hands already. At least until the southern States are reconciled, they will not provoke hostilities. It will take half a century for the feelings aroused by the late Civil War to be appeased. By that time Canada, in any event, will be old enough and strong enough to defy any power.





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